

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 DODE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
SP-02 INR-05 CIAE-00 MC-01 ACDA-10 EB-04 TRSE-00
SSO-00 INRE-00 /052 R

DRAFTED BY TEXT RECEIVED FROM DEFENSE:BDF
APPROVED BY NEA:SSOBER
DACS(SA) - COL. SMITH
ISA/NA - MR. REED
DSAA - MR. VON MARBOD
PM - RERICSON
T - LBROWN (INFO)

-----027684 131843Z /73

O R 131819Z AUG 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE
INFO USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192529

LIMDIS PERSONAL FOR CHARGE FROM GENERAL FISH

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, TS

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE EARLY DELIVERY OF VULCAN

THIS IS A JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

1. WHEN I VISITED SAUDI ARABIA FOLLOWING MY JUNE VISIT TO
TUNIS, SAUDI OFFICIALS INFORMED ME OF THEIR CONCERN THAT
THEY HAD DUPLICATED THEIR ACQUISITION OF CLOSE-IN AIR
DEFENSE WEAPONS, HAVING PURCHASED BOTH VULCAN AND OERLIKON.
THE SAUDIS WERE DEBATING THEIR PROBLEM AND CONSIDERING THE
POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFERRING ONE OF THE SYSTEMS TO ANOTHER
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COUNTRY. SUBSEQUENTLY, PRINCE SULTAN MENTIONED TO
SECRETARY VANCE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO CANCEL THE VULCAN
BUY; SULTAN INDICATED HE THOUGHT CANCELLATION COSTS WOULD
BE MINIMAL SINCE OTHER COUNTRIES WERE BUYING VULCAN. THE
SAUDI GENERAL STAFF HAS PROTESTED SULTAN'S ACTION AND THE
PROBLEM IS BEING RECONSIDERED. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS A
POSSIBILITY THAT VULCAN SYSTEMS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY

JUNE 1978 FOR ALLOCATION TO TUNISIA. WHILE I REALIZE TUNISIANS HAVE BEEN RECONSIDERING VULCAN QUESTION, THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE IS TO REQUEST THAT YOU SEEK TO DETERMINE WHETHER GOT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN 26 OF THESE VULCANS, SHOULD THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. WE LEAVE TO YOUR DISCRETION HOW MUCH OF THE BACKGROUND OF THIS SITUATION YOU RELAY TO TUNISIANS. ADDITIONAL PERTINENT INFORMATION FOLLOWS.

2. SHOULD THE SAUDI VULCANS BECOME AVAILABLE AND TUNISIA ACCEPT THEM, THE NEW PRICE TO TUNISIA WOULD BE ABOUT 681.8 THOUSAND DOLS FOR EACH OF 26 SELF-PROPELLED VULCAN SYSTEMS VICE 695.5 THOUSAND DOLS IN THE PRESENT LOA FOR CASE UBQ. AVAILABILITY FOR DELIVERY WOULD BEGIN IN JUNE 1978 VICE DECEMBER 1980, OR ABOUT 2 1/2 YEARS EARLIER THAN UNDER CASE UBQ.

3. THE MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS IN TUNISIA'S ACCEPTING EARLIER DELIVERY, AS WE SEE THEM, WOULD BE THE EARLIER REQUIREMENT FOR FUNDS AND THE NEED TO ADVANCE THE TUNISIAN ARMY'S VULCAN TRAINING. THERE WOULD BE NO REQUIREMENT TO RESUBMIT THE NOTIFICATION TO CONGRESS; THE FORMAL CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION PERIOD FOR CASE UBQ EXPIRES ON 21 AUGUST AND WE WOULD BE ABLE TO OFFER THE AMENDED LOA TO TUNISIA SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

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4. WITH RESPECT TO FUNDING THE POTENTIAL EARLIER ACQUISITION OF VULCAN, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THERE WILL BE ADDITIONAL FMS CREDIT FUNDS AVAILABLE AT THE END OF FY 77 AND WE ARE WILLING TO SEEK INTERAGENCY APPROVAL FOR THE REQUIRED ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR GOT. OTHER OPTIONS FOR PAYMENT INCLUDE CASH OR COMMERCIAL CREDIT. THE SPECIFIC PAYMENT SCHEDULE UNDER THE POSSIBLE NEW OPTION IS BEING PREPARED AND WILL BE FORWARDED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT WE CAN ALL STUDY THE TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.

5. SHOULD THE EARLIER AVAILABILITY MATERIALIZE AND TUNISIA AGREE TO ACCEPT, CONUS VULCAN TRAINING SHOULD BE INITIATED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1978 TO BE PREPARED FOR JUNE 1978 DELIVERY. ARMY WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE THIS TRAINING. SIX MONTHS WOULD PERMIT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ALL VULCAN PECULIAR MAINTENANCE TRAINING (FOR ABOUT 10 MEN) AND TRAINING OF A CADRE OF OPERATORS. TO MEET THE JANUARY 1978 STARTING DATE, THE MAINTENANCE SELECTEES WOULD HAVE TO BE ALREADY ENGLISH LANGUAGE QUALIFIED. THE BULK OF OPERATOR AND CREW TRAINING WOULD BE CONDUCTED IN-COUNTRY WITH A MOBILE TRAINING TEAM AFTER DELIVERY OF

THE SYSTEM.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING THE RESULTS OF YOUR
EXPLORATION OF THIS MATTER WITH GOT OFFICIALS, AS WELL
AS YOUR COMMENTS AND THOSE OF COLONEL DERAMUS, AS SOON
AS FEASIBLE. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIR DEFENSE, MILITARY PLANS, MISSILES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 13-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE192529
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BDF
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770292-1311
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770863/aaaacbla.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b528f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1607499
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POSSIBLE EARLY DELIVERY OF VULCAN THIS IS A JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE
TAGS: MASS, SA, TS
To: TUNIS
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b528f25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009